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### Service quality assessment in retail industry: some evidence from supermarkets in Greece

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#### Abstract

The main target of the businesses, operating in the retail sector, is to increase the number of their customers and keep them as satisfied as possible. The key in order to achieve and keep loyalty of their customers is the provision of qualified services. The objectives of this research are firstly, to identify the level of the customers' satisfaction from their shopping experience, secondly to identify the relevant service - quality dimensions used by Greek super market customers to evaluate service quality, thirdly, to assess customers' perceptions and expectations related to the quality provided by the supermarkets and fourthly, to investigate how closely customers' perceptions and expectations of service quality match.

To achieve the defined objectives, the present study utilized a modified SERVQUAL instrument. In order to obtain the necessary data a survey was conducted in various cities of Greece. Random sampling techniques were used in order to acquire a representative and reliable sample, and 795 usable questionnaires were collected. Descriptive statistical analysis, exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis were performed in order to examine the validity and reliability of the instrument.

The analysis reveals that a gap exists between the rating which customers assign to expectations and to perception statements. In fact, expectations exceed perceptions of the provided service quality, suggesting that there is room for quality improvement initiatives. Thus, the findings can be used as a guide for the managers to improve the crucial quality attributes and enhance service quality and business performance.

**Keywords:** service quality, SERVQUAL, retail industry, supermarkets, factor analysis, Greece